

1. Describe the practice proposed for recognition, and list its objectives. Detail how the practice is innovative and how it promotes high student achievement.

The use of *Culturegrams* is an approach to exploring cultural diversity and fosters the development of research techniques. Each student or group of students chooses a specific culture and researches data and information from texts, reference books, interviews, Internet, and periodicals to gather information on the many dimensions of that culture. Research areas include the language, as the students are expected to use greetings and common phrases, role relationships, and gestures. Students study personal appearance and bring pictures or don appropriate attire. The researchers then discuss the family relationships, economy, religion, art, music, literature, holidays, mores, and attitudes that are prevalent for the specific culture. Each holiday for that culture is recorded on a calendar and is celebrated with native food and customs. History, government, education, transportation, communication systems, health, sanitation, medical facilities, land, climate and other customs, courtesies and conditions are also presented.

The objectives of this program are to:

- Read and listen analytically with understanding and openness toward other points of view.
- Rescue, analyze and present information in order to develop and support a main point or to persuade an audience
- Evaluate the historical and cultural significance of a work of literature and art
- Describe the experiences of groups identified by race, gender, and/or ethnicity as examples of historical evolution
- Explain the concept of culture and the characteristics that distinguish one culture from another
- Analyze his own culture and compare/contrast it with other cultures
- Recognize prejudicial attitudes and discriminatory actions
- Recognize the cultural heterogeneity of the U.S by characterizing its racial, ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity
- Demonstrate a basic knowledge of world geography
- Behave cooperatively and responsibly in various social situations by showing respect for the norms and mores of the group.

This program is innovative and promotes high student achievement by allowing students to choose a culture of interest and by integrating the curriculum across all content standards. The students often go beyond the required categories and ask to learn to write various alphabets, hold "United Nations" debates on such topics as technology vs. environment and gender equity. Students are challenged to utilize all eight of Howard Gardner's multiple intelligences theory in their research and presentations; thus enhancing their academic strengths and building upon their weaknesses.

2. List the specific *Core Curriculum Content Standards*, including the *Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standards addressed by the practice and describe how the practice addresses those standard(s). Provide an example to substantiate your response.**

Many of the Core Curriculum Content Standards are addressed by the practice. They include, but are not limited to:

- 2. All students will use technology, information and other tools.
- 3. All students will use critical thinking, decision-making, and problem-solving skills
- 1.1 All students will acquire knowledge and skills that increase aesthetic awareness in dance, music, theater, and visual arts.
- 1.5 All students will identify the various historical, social, and cultural influences and traditions which have generated artistic accomplishments throughout the ages and which continue to shape contemporary arts.
- 2.4 All students will learn the biological, social, cultural, and psychological aspects of human sexuality and family life.
- 3.1 All students will speak for a variety of real purposes and audiences.
- 3.2 All students will listen actively in a variety of situations to information from a variety of sources.
- 3.3 All students will write in clear, concise, organized language that varies in content and form for different audiences and purposes.
- 3.4 All students will read various materials and texts with comprehension and critical analysis.
- 3.5 All students will view, understand, and use nontextual visual information.
- 4.6 All students will develop number sense and an ability to represent numbers in a variety of forms and use numbers in diverse situations.
- 4.11 All students will develop an understanding of patterns, relationships, and functions and will use them to represent and explain real-world phenomena.
- 5.1 All students will learn to identify systems of interacting components and understand how their interactions combine to produce the overall behavior
- 5.3 All students will develop an understanding of how people of various have contributed to the advancement of science and technology, and how major discoveries and events have advanced science and technology.
- 6.4 All students will acquire historical understanding of societal ideas and forces throughout the history of New Jersey, the United States, and the world.
- 6.5 All students will acquire understanding of varying cultures throughout the history of New Jersey, the United States, and the world.
- 6.6 All students will acquire understanding of economic forces, ideas, and institutions throughout the history of New Jersey, the United States, and the world.
- 6.7 All students will acquire geographical understanding by studying the world in spatial terms.

- 7.2 All students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the interrelationship between language and culture for at least one world language in addition to English

Each student does extensive research through various tools and presents information through power point presentations, digital pictures and projectors. In our "United Nation" caucuses, the students take the views of their culture and discuss problems such as how to achieve world peace. Every student also chooses a work of art, music, and literature that is famous in their chosen culture. They discuss with the class the characteristics that make it unique to the specific culture. If possible, students also present a film. Students research family roles and marriage rituals. They debate gender equity within their cultures. All presentations are oral and written. The class listens and actively participates with each speaker to learn about all cultures, not just the one they studied. Students also create travelogues, commercials and brochures.

Students study the population and economy of their culture. They explain how this affects other cultures. The students become aware of global interaction, realize how one culture affects the entire world, and how components interact with each other. In their presentation, students teach others about important scientists and explorers. They discuss how each culture views the environment. Through research, students become aware of the culture's history, societal ideas, forces, economics, and institutions. Students are able to locate where the culture originated and its contemporary geo-locations. Students learn simple phrases and/or the alphabet and display them in the classroom. When more than one culture shares the same language, the students research how and why the language spread.

3. Describe the educational needs of students that the practice addresses. Document the assessment measures used to determine the extent to which the objectives of the practice have been met. Provide assessments and data to show how the practice met these needs.

The students that participate in this program are 8th grade at-risk, disaffected students from an urban setting. Most of these students have never been outside their immediate neighborhood. The community is extremely diverse and includes several races, ethnic and religious groups. The children need to have the curriculum integrated in a way that is relevant to their everyday life. This practice teaches the students why many community members look and dress differently and practice different customs and rituals.

As this practice is on-going throughout the year, there are several and various assessments to meet our objectives. Formal and informal assessments were used to accommodate all of Gardner's multiple intelligences.

Because it is an 8th grade class we follow the GEPA reading, writing and speaking rubrics, including content, structure and usage. The average scores on a 1-4 scale were:

TEST	Oct.	May
Reading information texts	1.5	3.0
Writing informational essays	1.0	3.5
Oral presentations	1.5	3.5

Rubrics were teacher and student created and developed for art, music, and debates. They include structure, theme, cultural characteristics, facts, amount of references and quality of presentation.

The students developed graphic organizers such as Venn diagrams to compare and contrast their studied culture with that of a classmate. They created attribute webs of every culture presented. They also ranked these attributes in priority order after classifying economic, political, social and symbolic attributes of the cultures. Students created brochures and television commercials advertising appreciation for features of the culture.

The class was given formal tests on geography, history and language of all presented cultures.

Class average pre test	2%
Class average post test	95%

During our debates, the students took the position of their specific culture and discussed gender equity, technology vs. environment, and if families should be limited in size. Other assessments included surveys asking knowledge, appreciation, and interest in various cultures. In October, 100% of the students did not care about other cultures. They ostracized and mocked differences. However; in May, 100% of the students made relationships with people from other cultures and wanted to learn more.

We have no doubt that all our objectives were successfully met and surpassed.

4. Describe how you would replicate the practice in another school and/or district.

This practice can be easily replicated for any grade in any school. *Culturegrams* can be tailored to meet the needs of any group. Since research is the key element, no cost is involved. The desire and commitment of the staff to incorporate this component into the curriculum is the most important requirement for replication.